

New Mexico Court Volunteer Program

**Recruiting, Retaining,
and Recognizing Court
Volunteers**

New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts
Funded by State Justice Institute
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SJI

New Mexico
Court Volunteer Program
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“Service to others is the rent you pay for your
room here on earth.”

—Muhammad Ali

Introduction

New Mexico has a valuable yet untapped resource: people willing to serve. Through a volunteer service program, communities and courts come together in partnership to improve how courts respond to the needs and interests of the people they serve. This how-to booklet for judges, court administrators, and court clerks was developed with funding by the State Justice Institute.

In preparation for the development of this program, we researched court volunteer programs in other states and visited existing court volunteer programs in New Mexico. We wish to thank the following members of our advisory board who assisted in the development of this booklet by providing information, guidance, and suggestions:

- u **Bennina Armijo-Sisneros**, *Court Administrator, Second Judicial District*
- u **Judge Richard G. Chavez**, *Taos Municipal Court*
- u **Ollie Fitzgerald**, *Court Clerk, Eddy County Magistrate Court*
- u **Judge Ralph W. Gallini**, *First Judicial District Court*
- u **Judge Leo E. Gonzales**, *San Miguel County Magistrate Court*
- u **Marian Hail**, *Court Volunteer*
- u **Linda Kuentsler**, *Chief Clerk, Hidalgo County Magistrate Court*
- u **Judge Russell D. Martin**, *Lea County Magistrate Court*
- u **Judge Thomas Pestak**, *Sierra County Magistrate Court*
- u **Rose Roybal**, *Chief Clerk, Santa Fe Magistrate Court*
- u **Rosalie G. Saiz**, *Chief Clerk, Grant County Magistrate Court*
- u **Daniel Smith**, *V.I.P. Program Director, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court*
- u **Judge Lonnie Valencia**, *San Juan County Magistrate Court*
- u **Judge Barbara Vigil**, *First Judicial District Court*
- u **Patricia Wallace**, *Attorney Clerk, New Mexico Court of Appeals*

Volunteers Make a Difference

Volunteers are a cost-effective way to improve the quality of your court's services and operations. They can help your court get caught up, ease the workload, and improve the efficiency of your court.

In addition, a successful volunteer program can enhance good public relations by giving citizens the opportunity to see how the court operates. Volunteering allows individuals to become personally involved in the judicial process, and this involvement increases the public's understanding and appreciation of the court system and how the courts operate. Judges and court staff benefit from a volunteer's outside perspective and the voice of the community. Volunteers often become advocates and spokespersons for the court and contribute to an increase in public confidence in the court system.

Volunteers enable courts to increase the range of services and programs available to the public while volunteer involvement positively affects the public's attitudes toward the courts.

Volunteers can assist with a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities:

- u File management
- u Tracking of DWI s
- u Filing
- u Docketing
- u Entering cases
- u Assisting judges in the courtroom
- u Bailiff duties
- u Grant writing
- u Scheduling
- u Photocopying
- u Answering phones
- u Information desk
- u Clearing of files
- u Closing cases
- u Community service project coordination
- u Sharing knowledge/skills
- u Training
- u Public relations
- u Simple court interpreting
- u Jury management

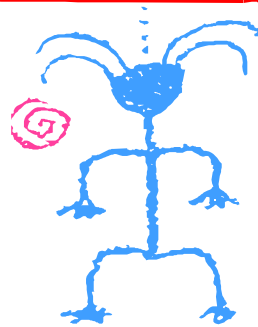


Understanding Volunteers

Volunteers serve for different reasons: some because they want to give back to the community in a meaningful way; many because they have skills, knowledge, and/or talents they wish to share; a few because they are retired, bored, or lonely; some because they simply like people; some who need work experience or an internship; some who are fascinated by the court system; and others because they want to feel needed. It is important to recognize the volunteer's motives and make sure those needs are fulfilled. Regardless of the reason for volunteering, no one likes to feel his or her time and skills are being wasted. It is also imperative that a volunteer's time be used wisely to meet both the volunteer's expectations and the court's needs.

Desirable Characteristics of Volunteers

- u Ability to communicate effectively
- u Positive attitude
- u Good interpersonal skills
- u Interest in and understanding of co-workers
- u Understanding of the diversity of people in the court
- u Non-judgmental personality
- u Ability to maintain confidentiality
- u Dependability/reliability
- u Ability to adjust to court rules, policies, and procedures
- u Positive belief in the judicial system and government
- u Appropriate demeanor/dress



Recruiting Volunteers

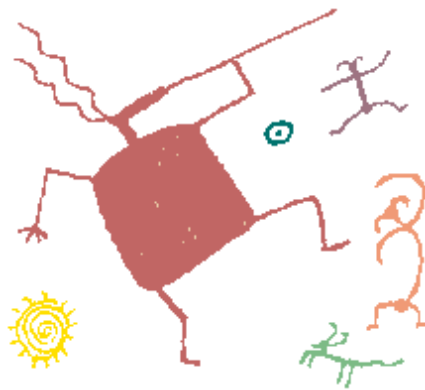
Courts find volunteers through community senior citizen programs, such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), local colleges, churches, community service programs, newspaper ads, or "word of mouth."

Newspapers are often interested in running stories about innovative court programs. Contact your local newspaper with the information or submit a story for publication. You can also submit ads by delivery, fax, or mail.

All courts are responsible for any fees incurred with the exception of the magistrate courts which should contact AOC Fiscal Services for a purchase order before placing an ad.

Volunteers can often be recruited through specialized programs, such as:

- u Universities, Colleges, Community Colleges
Internships
College Credit
- u High School Career Programs
- u Youth Programs and Organizations
State, County and City Programs
Religious Organizations
- u Community and Civic Programs





Sample Recruitment Ad

At a time of increasing demand for court assistance and limited budgets, the [Zia Magistrate Court] is experiencing a tremendous increase in workload. The court is currently seeking volunteers with skills in the following areas:

customer service

computers

legal research

bailiffs

administrative support

written communication

security

graphic artists

If you would be interested in helping the [Zia Magistrate Court] to meet the needs of our community, please contact [Connie Justice, Chief Clerk, at 555-0077].

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program helps individuals age 55 and older put their skills and life experience to work for their communities. RSVP volunteers serve from a few hours to 40 hours a week. Many RSVP volunteers have lived in their communities for a long time and want to serve as a way of giving something back. Court administrators interested in RSVP volunteers can contact the RSVP director in their community. The following cities in New Mexico have RSVP programs:

Alamogordo

Joe Quintana
2201 Puerto Rico Ave.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
Phone 439-4154
Fax 439-4160

Bernalillo

Ward Keller
P. O. Box 40
Bernalillo, NM 87004
Phone 777-7188
Fax 867-7600

Farmington

Dawn Facka
4601 College Blvd
Farmington, NM 87402
Phone 566-3293
Fax 566-3687

Roswell

Leslie Jansson
813 N. Richardson Ste E
Roswell, NM 88201
Phone 630-3960
Fax 630-9805

Albuquerque

Lori Floyd
714 7th Street SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone 764-1612
Fax 764-1260

Carlsbad

Josie Methola
2814 San Jose Blvd
Carlsbad, NM 88220
Phone 887-0871
Fax 887-0871

Gallup

Rachel Sanchez
609 E. Coal Ave
Gallup, NM 87301
Phone 722-3565
Fax 863-7987

Ruidoso

Sandee Jourden
501 Sudderth, Box 10
Ruidoso, NM 88345
Phone 257-4565
Fax 630-9805

Artesia

Nadine Price
611 Mahone Dr. #D
Artesia, NM 88210
Phone 746-3655
Fax 746-3886

Clovis

Lucinda Bonney
816 N. Main
Clovis, NM 88101
Phone 763-6009
Fax 763-3656

Las Cruces

Aurora Ybarra
P. O. Box Drawer 20000
Las Cruces, NM 88004
Phone 528-3002
Fax 528-3102

Santa Fe

Lupita Martinez
Box 909
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: 995-4760
Fax 995-4797

Belen

Theresa Chene
100 S. Main
Belen, NM 87002
Phone 864-8630
Fax 864-8408

Deming

Sandi Speer
800 South Granite
Deming, NM 88030
Phone 546-8823
Fax 546-4076

Los Alamos

Louise Hassman
1000 Oppenheimer
Los Alamos, NM 87544
Phone 662-8923
Fax 661-7677

Silver City

Kathy Gallardo
P. O. Box 2990
Silver City, NM 88062
Phone 388-2523
Fax 388-5118

Portales

Judy Griego
1100 Community Way
Portales, NM 88130
Phone 356-8576
Fax 356-8031

Truth or Consequences

Jennie Bustamante
P. O. Box 1049
T or C, NM 87901
Phone 894-3045
Fax 894-3065

Specialized Volunteer Opportunities

u Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

CASA's mission is to support effective volunteer advocacy for the best interest of abused and neglected children caught up in our court system, and to ensure that every child has a safe, supportive, and permanent home.

CASA's responsibilities include: familiarizing themselves with the circumstances surrounding the case; making an independent evaluation of what is in the child's best interest; and monitoring the case until a safe, permanent home is found for the child.

A judge speaks..... "the involvement and participation of CASA volunteers is a fundamentally hopeful part of the process. With CASA, there is a sense of encouragement where before it was only despair."

For more information about CASA, contact:

Mr. Brian O'Connell, Executive Director
Statewide CASA Network
Albuquerque, New Mexico
505-875-0978
casanet@rt66.com

u Citizens Review Board (CRB)

All counties in New Mexico have a Citizens Review Board (CRB), which is a group of trained volunteers from a particular community or county. If a child abuse/neglect case stays in the court system for a while, the CRB will meet to review the case on a regular basis and make recommendations to the judge. Everyone involved with the case, including the parents and attorneys, are invited to the CRB meetings.

For more information about the CRB, contact:

Ms. Pat Briggs, Project Director
Statewide CRB Project
Albuquerque, New Mexico
1-888-836-2020
nmcrb@mail.com

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u Volunteers In Probation (VIP) Program

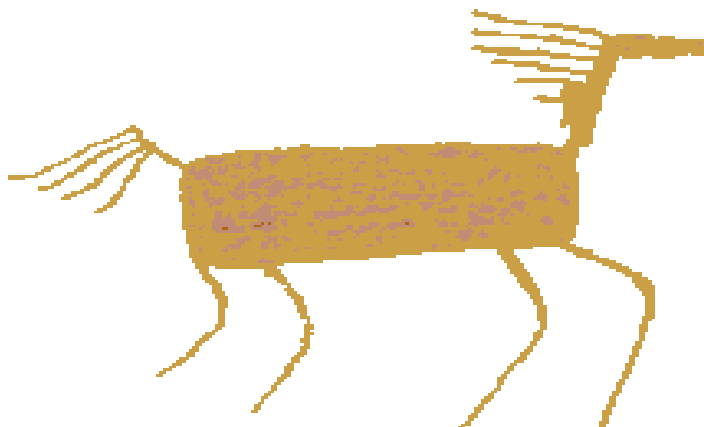
The Volunteers in Probation (VIP) Program began in 1978 in the Albuquerque Municipal Court and continued when that court merged with Metropolitan Court in 1980.

The volunteer probation officer is an officer of the court, and his or her primary responsibility is to supervise the probationer to verify that the conditions of the probation are being met. There are currently about 65 to 70 volunteers serving in the program. Volunteers are asked to make a one-year commitment to the program, and each volunteer must attend about 20 hours of training. All applicants to the program are interviewed and screened, and a background check is run on each individual.

Daniel Smith, Director of the VIP Program, provides support and guidance to the volunteers. VIPs are matched with a probationer, and a letter of introduction is mailed to the probationer. The probationer and VIP meet at a neutral location on a weekly basis. The VIP monitors compliance, reviews the counselor's progress report, provides a monthly report to the director, and notifies the director of non-compliance. Each VIP is responsible for a caseload of at three probationers.

For more information about the VIP Program, contact:

Mr. Daniel Smith, Director
Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court
Albuquerque, New Mexico
505-841-8178
dsmith@metrocourt.state.nm.us



Managing the Program



- u Background checks on volunteers are highly recommended. The MVD, NCIC, and local and state police are good resources for background checks.
- u All judges and court staff must take an active role in welcoming, training, and recognizing volunteers.
- u Provide the volunteer with a job description.
- u If you have a dress code, provide a copy of the policy to the volunteer.
- u Designate a special place, whether it be a desk, a table, or just a filing cabinet drawer, for the volunteer. If you accumulate work for the volunteer between visits, place it in that designated area.
- u Provide nametags for volunteers so the public will not mistake the volunteer for a court employee and expect assistance.
- u Recognize that a volunteer program requires a specific commitment of time and resources — but it pays off in big dividends.
- u With proper training and supervision, volunteers are as reliable and committed as paid staff.
- u Volunteers are a priceless resource and deserve thoughtful recognition for all their efforts. Express your appreciation to your volunteers often and creatively.
- u Be sure your volunteer signs a waiver before beginning work; fax the waiver to the Administrative Office of the Courts, 827-4824.
- u Refer to the Supreme Court Directive item #4 on page 16 concerning volunteers handling confidential information.
- u Keep track of your volunteer's time using the timesheet provided.
- u If a volunteer makes things difficult for other staff, paid or unpaid, it cannot help but diminish the quality of the program; therefore, it is entirely appropriate to dismiss a volunteer as long as there is cause and the cause is clearly understood.
- u The Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network have a "GREAT WEBSITE" for additional ideas and information.

<http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Showing Appreciation



Please keep track of each volunteer's hours on the form provided. The chief clerk should keep this record. Keeping track of volunteer hours enables your court to place a quantifying value on the volunteer's contributions to the court and helps keep track of the volunteer's anniversary date so you can remember to show extra appreciation on those milestone occasions. quarterly, yearly, etc.

Recognizing and thanking your volunteers is the most important aspect of a successful court volunteer program. Volunteers are there only because they want to be. Show respect for the volunteers and make them feel important, special, and a vital part of your court.

Ideas for Recognizing Volunteers

- u Remember volunteer's birthday with a card/gift/cake/lunch.
- u Recognize volunteer on his/her anniversary date with a celebration/gift.
- u National Volunteer Week is in April. Present volunteer with a certificate of appreciation.
- u Send picture and information about volunteer to *Court Link*: crtlink@nmcourts.com.
- u Remember to say thank you, thank you, thank you....
- u Include volunteer in all court events as if he/she is an employee of the court. Invite him/her to birthday celebrations, court dedications, etc.
- u Provide volunteer with a copy of the *Court Link*.
- u Always have work for the volunteer. Volunteers do not like to waste their time; they need to feel they are doing something important and contributing to the work of the court.

Special Benefits for Volunteers

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| u College Credit | u Experience |
| u Internships | u Networking |
| u Training | u SHARE Program |

(Share Program is an opportunity for volunteers to participate in a food purchasing partnership. For more information call 1-800-933-7424).

Poem for Volunteers

Valuable is the work you do.

Outstanding in how you always come through.

Loyal, sincere, and full of good cheer.

Untiring in your efforts throughout the year.

Notable are the contributions you make,

Trustworthy in every project you take.

Eager to reach your every goal,

Effective in the way you fulfill your role.

Ready with a smile like a shining star,

Special and wonderful—that's what you are.



New Mexico Courts Volunteer Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Best time to reach me: _____

Day(s) I would like to work as a volunteer: _____

Number of days per week I would prefer to volunteer: _____

Number of hours per day I would prefer to volunteer: _____

Skills, Abilities, and Interests

1. Do you have typing skills?
2. Do you have computer skills?
3. If not, are you interested in learning computer skills?
4. What is your job or career background?

5. Are you currently employed?
6. Are you now a volunteer or have you worked as a volunteer before?
7. If you have volunteer experience, where/when?

8. In which of the following volunteer activities are you interested?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> File management | <input type="checkbox"/> Answering phones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracking of DWI s | <input type="checkbox"/> Information desk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filing | <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing of files |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Docketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Closing cases |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entering cases | <input type="checkbox"/> Community service pro-
ject coordination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting judges in the courtroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing knowledge/
mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bailiff duties | <input type="checkbox"/> Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopying | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court monitor | |

9. Please list two references that we may contact:

Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____
Phone _____	Phone _____

10. Please give the name of a person we may contact in case of emergency.

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____

Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of court business, we do conduct back-ground checks on volunteers.

Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for submitting your application to the Court Volunteer Program.

Interview Questions

1. Why are you interested in volunteering for the New Mexico court system?
2. What experience can you bring to our court?
3. What are your skills?
4. Are you interested in working on the computer?
5. Are you willing and able to commit to certain days and times?
6. If the court experienced an urgent need, would you be able to work at different times?
7. Approximately how many hours per week will you be able to work?

8. Do you have experience working with the public? Please explain.
9. At times, court staff has to deal with people, either on the phone or in person, who are confused, angry, frustrated, or very rude. If you were to come into contact with someone like that, how would you handle the situation?
10. The court can become a very busy, hectic place. How do you handle stress?
11. Have you been a volunteer before? If so, where?
12. If you have been a volunteer, what do you like best about volunteering? What do you like least?
13. When would you be able to start?

14. The _____ Court has the following volunteer opportunities available (court administrator or chief clerk should explain/describe the volunteer needs of the court):

-
-
-
-
-

15. Do any of these opportunities interest you? If so, which one(s)?

16. Would you be able to perform these functions either with or without reasonable accommodation?

THANK YOU FOR MEETING WITH US TODAY AND BEING WILLING TO VOLUNTEER FOR OUR COURT.

NEW MEXICO SUPREME COURT POLICY DIRECTIVE NO. 10

(Adopted March 22, 1994)

This policy directive is issued in accordance with NMSA 1978, § 35-7-1 to provide guidelines regarding the use of volunteers and community service participants in the magistrate courts.

A. VOLUNTEERS. The magistrate courts may allow volunteers to assist the court provided that the courts adhere to the following directives. A "volunteer" is any person who performs any type of clerical or other work for the court who is not a judicial branch employee or who is not paid for the work by funds appropriated to the Administrative Office of the Courts. A person assigned to the court under a DWI local program grant is a court volunteer.

1. Volunteers must comply with all laws, rules, directives, and regulations governing court procedure.
2. The judge must have each volunteer sign a waiver before the volunteer begins work at the court (waiver form follows). All signed waivers must be filed with the director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Compliance with the waiver requirement will be subject to audit.
3. Should a volunteer be a part to a case in the magistrate court, either during service to the court or within a reasonable time thereafter, the judge must recuse from the case to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
4. Volunteers shall not perform tasks that involve access to confidential information, such as screening results in DWI cases or affidavits in support of search and arrest warrants, or that are required to be performed by a bonded state employee, such as receiving and receipting funds or issuing notices under seal. Examples of the type of work that volunteers may perform include filing of public records and documents and routine typing of forms or notices that the judge or clerk will sign and serve. If you have any questions about whether a particular task is appropriate for a volunteer, please call the Administrative Office of the Courts.

B. COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTICIPANTS. Paragraphs 1 and 4 above also apply to community service participants. Those persons performing community service for the court are not required to sign the waiver because statutory immunity from liability is provided by NMSA 1978, § 31-12-3. This statute also states that persons performing community service shall not be entitled to any of the benefits of state employment.

WAIVER FOR COURT VOLUNTEERS

I offer to assist the _____ Court at my own risk and with full knowledge and understanding that I will receive no remuneration from the court or from the judicial branch of New Mexico state government in any form, that I cannot receive any of the benefits of state employment such as workers' compensation should I be injured, and that I hold the State of New Mexico harmless from any claim for damages, injuries or other losses that may arise during the course of my assistance at the court or as a consequence of my assistance at the court.

I further understand that I will work at the pleasure of the presiding judge or administrative authority. I agree to comply with instructions from him or her or from the court administrator or chief clerk and to refrain from performing any task that I have not been specifically permitted or directed to perform.

I will comply to the best of my ability with all rules, regulations, directives and instructions regarding court procedure. I am aware that I have no authority to act as agent for the court or for the State or New Mexico and will not represent myself to be or purport to be an agent of the court or the State.

I willingly sign this waiver to provide assistance to the court or agency for so long as I am willing to volunteer or for so long as my services are needed by the court or agency.

VOLUNTEER'S NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

APPROVED BY:

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

DATE

Complete the following only if the volunteer is assigned to the court through a DWI local program grant: PAID BY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

Volunteer Time Sheet

Name: _____ Court: _____

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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Ask Questions/Call for Advice



- u Pamela Hull, Volunteer Project Coordinator, AOC, 827-3921
- u Carmen Rodriguez, Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, AOC, 827-7967
- u Rosalie Saiz, Chief Clerk, Silver City Magistrate Court, 538-3811
- u Jolene Smith, Chief Clerk, Farmington Magistrate Court, 326-4338, X102
- u Gloria Fry, Probation Program Coordinator, Farmington Magistrate Court, 326-4338, X110
- u Daniel Smith, Director of Volunteers in Probation (VIP) Program, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court, 841-8105
- u Brian O'Connell, Executive Director of Statewide CASA Network, 875-0978
- u Pat Briggs, Project Director of Statewide CRB Project, 1-888-836-2020